



Express Terms
and
Purpose and Rationale Statement
for Work Group 9:M Occupancies
Section 508.3 Mixed Occupancies

EXPRESS TERMS

508.3 Mixed occupancies. Each portion of a building shall be individually classified in accordance with Section 302.1.

Where a building contains more than one occupancy group, the building or portion thereof shall comply with Sections 508.3.1 or 508.3.3 or a combination of these sections.

Exceptions:

-  1. Occupancies separated in accordance with Section 509.
-  2. Where required by Table 415.3.2, areas of Group H-1, H-2 or H-3 occupancies shall be located in a separate and detached building or structure.

508.3.1.3 Separation. A separation is required between accessory occupancies and the main occupancy in accordance with Table 508.3.3.

 **508.3.2 Reserved.**

PURPOSE AND RATIONALE STATEMENT

(SFM) The purpose of this proposed amendment is to reasonably maintain the current level of fire/life safety provided by the CBC for buildings containing mixed occupancies by eliminating Section 508.3.2 Nonseparated Occupancies of the 2006 IBC as an acceptable option for addressing buildings containing more than one occupancy classification.

Section 508.3 Mixed Occupancies of the 2006 IBC treats mixed occupancies in buildings very similarly to the CBC with one significant exception. That exception is the nonseparated occupancies provided for in Section 508.3.2 which is proposed to be deleted. Basically, the nonseparated occupancies option allows mixed occupancies in buildings without a requirement that they be separated with fire-resistive construction in the form of fire barrier walls and horizontal assemblies.

However, the CBC does allow Group M Occupancies in buildings with other occupancies without a required fire-resistive occupancy separation provided the other occupancies are either a Group A-3, B, or F-1 Occupancy. Otherwise, the Group M Occupancy is required to be separated from all other occupancy classifications that may be in the building with fire-resistive occupancy separations. Similarly, under the separated occupancies option in Section 508.3.3 of the 2006 IBC, Group M Occupancies are not required to be separated with fire-resistive occupancy separations from Group B and F-1 Occupancies. However, the IBC does require the Group M occupancies to be separated from Group S-1 Occupancies but then provides exceptions based on Footnote b to Table 508.3.3 which are virtually the same as those exceptions allowed in CBC Section 309.2.2 for the same occupancy separations as the IBC. Therefore, deleting the nonseparated occupancy option in Section 508.3.2 of the IBC will make the IBC comparable to the CBC for the protection of separation of occupancies involving Group M Occupancies in buildings with multiple occupancies.

This makes sense since Group M Occupancies can have significantly high fire loads as well as high densities of occupants especially during peak holiday season shopping days. They should be provided with the appropriate fire-resistive occupancy separations to protect not only the Group M Occupancy from the adjacent occupancies but also to protect the adjacent occupancies from the Group M Occupancy. Those occupancies for which the fire-resistive separation would be required by Section 508.3.3 of the IBC would include Groups A, E, I, and R Occupancies. These are all occupancies that have a high life safety risk which should be required to be separated from a Group M Occupancy. As indicated previously, Group M Occupancies can have high fire loads which can result in significant fires exposing such adjacent occupancies and the occupants therein. By providing fire-resistive occupancy separations between the Group M Occupancies and these life safety related occupancies, the occupants of the adjacent occupancies will have a reasonable degree of protection to provide them with adequate time to react to the fire in the adjacent Group M Occupancy and thus exit the building as needed without being exposed to untenable conditions. Or such separations allow the occupants to remain in place until the fire department arrives and either extinguishes the fire in the adjacent occupancy or takes appropriate search and rescue actions to find and relocate or evacuate the occupants, especially where they are not capable of relocating themselves.